Spada.

One of the first words that a visitor to Java or Sumatra hears is "spada." It is, in the hotels of the Dutch Colonies, the common call for a servant; a person shouts "spada" in the same way that in this Colony he shouts "boy" and in the same curious way the servant, wherever he may be, shouts back "tuan." The word is not a native one, and is not used by the natives.

The derivation usually given of the word is a corruption of two Malay words "siapa ada" (is anyone there?).

I do not know however whether any one has suggested that the word dates from, and is a survival of, the days of British rule in the island now under the Dutch flag. Such however is probably the case. The use in the Bengal Presidency of the call "koi hai" (is anyone there?) is so well known that a civil servant of that Presidency is generally known as "Qui-hai."* I suggest that "siapa ada" is merely the translation of "koi hai" and that it was introduced by the servants of the Honourable East India Company who had served in Calcutta before they came further east. "Siapa ada" certainly is not idiomatic Malay, and would not ordinarily be used by Malays in the sense in which, in this case, "spada" is.

Probably it is this very fact, quite as much as the open vowel sounds of the syllables, that have led to its present corrupted and contracted form.

If my suggestion is correct, two curious facts are worthy of note: first, that in India it is the caller and in the Netherlands Indies it is the person called that is known (in each case

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* It has even passed into the French language.

In the "Correspondance avec sa famille" of Victor Jacquemont therre is the following passage (Vol: II. page 308 :)

"J'ai vu dans vos gazettes de Calcutta les clameurs de *quoihacs* (sobiquet des Européens Bengalis de ce cote) sur la chaleur."

by the alien nation) by the words of the call; and second, that the call survives only in a country that has ceased to be under British rule, and does not survive (if indeed it ever was known) in the Colony of the Straits Settlements.

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